

CLAIMS

1. A latching apparatus comprising:

a post member defining,

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an elongated axis,

an elongated, laterally extending latching
surface defined at an outer radius from
said axis, and

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an elongated, laterally extending
releasing surface defined at an inner
radius from said axis, wherein said
outer radius is greater than said inner
radius;

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a latching assembly defining a passage for
receiving said post member and including a
grip means extending at least partially into
said passage for,

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effecting a grip between said post member
and said latching assembly when said
grip means engages said latching
surface, and

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releasing said grip between said post
member and said latching assembly when
said grip means engages said releasing
surface; and

a moving means for,

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moving said latching surface into
engagement with said grip means,
whereby said grip is effected between
said post member and said latching
assembly, and

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moving said releasing surface into
engagement with said grip means,
whereby said grip is released between
said post member and said latching

assembly.

2. Apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said releasing surface defines a smooth surface.
3. Apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said latching surface defines a notched surface.
4. Apparatus of Claim 3, wherein said notched surface includes, at least, a plurality of teeth.
5. Apparatus of Claim 1,
wherein said grip means includes, at least, a ball, and
wherein said latching means further comprises,
an inner shell defining said passage and further defining a radial opening in said inner shell, wherein said ball is located in and radially movable within said radial opening,
an outer shell positioned outside said inner shell, wherein said inner shell is axially slidable in a first direction and a second direction with respect to said outer shell, said outer shell including, at least, a tapered portion defining a tapered inner surface adjacent to said ball, and
a biasing means for biasing said inner shell axially in said first direction such that said ball is biased into engagement with said tapered inner surface, whereby said ball is biasly urged radially inwardly into said passage, wherein said biasing means

accommodates movement of said inner shell in said second direction to accommodate radial movement of said ball out of said passage.